

Creating and Auditing Your Assessment Map



An assessment map helps to visually organize the many assessments used within an LEA/district or school. With an annual audit, it becomes a living document – one that adapts to changing needs and strategically enhances the assessment data that your LEA/district or school is collecting.

Month	Assessment	Purpose	6	7	8
December	STAR 360 - Reading	Benchmark assessment - determines students' instructional reading level and progress towards standards mastery	X	X	X
	CDTs - Math	Diagnoses each students' strengths/needs relative to expectations of grade level standards	X	X	X

Figure 1. Excerpt from a sample assessment map

WHAT IS AN ASSESSMENT MAP?

Definition and Benefits

An assessment map is a visual representation of K-12 student learning assessments that are required in an LEA or school. It is typically created at the LEA/system level, but may also be created at the individual school level. Assessments included range from summative, benchmark, and diagnostic assessments, with some LEAs choosing to also include required formative assessments. Locally administered assessments and statewide assessments are typically included in an overall assessment map.

Name of Assessment	Students to be Tested	Testing Window
AIMSweb (Reading only)	Identified students targeted for reading intervention support	BOY 9/1-9/17 MOY: 1/4-1/21 EOY: 5/16-6/3
Keystone Algebra	Identified 8 th grade students	5/16-5/27

Figure 2. Excerpts from assessment maps

Assessment Tool	Grades	Windows	Data Review Expectations
Lit CDT	10 th Grade Literature	Semester 1 Courses Sept 14, 2021 (Window Sept 13-24, 2021) Dec 1, 2021 (Window Nov 30-Dec 10, 2021) Semester 2 Courses Feb 1, 2022 (Window Jan 31-Feb 11, 2022) April 5, 2022 (Window April 4-13, 2022) Full Year Courses Sept 14, 2021 (Window Sept 13-24, 2021) Dec 1, 2021 (Window Nov 30-Dec 10, 2021) April 5, 2022 (Window April 4-13, 2022)	Data will be reviewed by District Level Leadership, by School Leadership Teams, and Lit Department/Grade Level Teams following the close of each assessment window.
Alg I CDT Subtests	Alg I Course	As needed	Teachers will review and use data for planning and instruction.

Key Features

While assessment maps vary in style or formatting, the common components of a map include:

- **Which** student learning assessments are required at each grade or subject level
- **When** the assessment is to be given (administration windows; see Fig. 2)
- **For which students** (all or targeted group; see Fig. 2)

Assessment maps may also:

- **Identify the type and purpose** of the assessment (benchmark, diagnostic, summative, formative; see Fig. 3)
- **Document data meeting schedules** that correspond to the administration dates, so that each assessment administered is analyzed and acted upon by a data team in a meaningful and useful timeframe
- **Indicate who is responsible** for the administration of the student learning assessment
- **Include key dates** for Keystone exams, AP exams, PSSA/PASA dates and grade levels as relevant

TYPE	DEFINITION/USE	ASSESSMENTS
Universal Screener	Conducted to identify or predict students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes. Universal screening assessments are typically brief, conducted with all students at a grade level, and followed by additional testing or short-term progress monitoring to corroborate students' risk status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acadience® Learning • STAR Math • STAR Reading • WIDA Screener/KindergartenScreener
Diagnostic Assessment	Often focuses on one area or domain of knowledge and provides educators with Information about each student's prior knowledge or skills before beginning instruction. Diagnostic assessments show students areas of strength and need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acadience® Learning • Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT) from PDE • STAR Math • STAR Reading
Benchmark Assessment	Measure students' progress on grade level standards to monitor student progress and provide teachers with data about how to adjust instruction. Tests are aligned to state standards for academic content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acadience® Learning • Firefly from PDE • iLit/GRADE • Imagine Learning/Galileo • Imagine Math • STAR Math • STAR Reading • WIDA Model
Summative Assessment	Evaluate student learning at the end of an Instructional unit using state eligible content standards. Monitor student progress and provide teachers with data about how to adjust instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCESS/ACCESS Alternative • AP Exams • Common Unit Assessments • PSSA/PASA • Keystone
Formative Assessment	Monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. Allows teachers to modify and adjust instruction during the lesson.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit Ticket • SAS Assessment Center from PDE • Summaries • White Boards • Etc.

Figure 3. Sample of assessment map organized by type and purpose

The benefits of creating a map

An assessment map can offer your LEA/district or school:

- **A sharpened focus** with consistency and alignment across schools and teachers within an LEA/district (horizontal and vertical articulation)
- **A deeper understanding** of types of assessments and their purposes
- **Transparency and visibility** for all stakeholders (families, students, staff)

CREATING AN ASSESSMENT MAP

When no assessment map exists, the following steps are recommended to get started:

1. **Form a K-12 committee** with representatives across schools, levels, and expertise. This may include, but not be limited to:
 - General Education
 - Special Education
 - School Psychologist
 - Content Specialists/Coaches
 - K-12 Content Leaders
 - LEA/District and School Leaders

2. **Ensure committee background knowledge** of student learning assessment types (benchmark, diagnostic, summative, formative)
 - **TIP:** Including general and special education can ensure a representative of the curriculum overall, as well as the potential needs of individual students to ensure assessments serve the intended purpose
 - **TIP:** Including a school psychologist may be a way to bring a depth of assessment expertise to the team as the team reviews more technical details and underpinnings of assessments

3. **Inventory all assessments** that are currently in use across schools and teachers.

4. **Create a feature matrix** to discuss each assessment to determine whether to keep or discard. LEAs may consider the following features, as well as features that are relevant to their context (See Fig. 4, not in priority order):
 - Purpose of the assessment
 - Type of student learning assessment (benchmark, diagnostic, summative, formative)
 - Skills assessed
 - Cost
 - Time to administer and score
 - Format (oral, paper/pencil, computer)
 - Ease of analysis by teachers
 - Alignment to PA Core Standards
 - Technical adequacy (validity and reliability)
 - Other?

Assessment	Purpose	Type	Skills Measured	Time to Administer	Time to Score	Cost	Group vs/ Individual	Technical Manual Access/ Review
Firefly								
CDT								
Acadience®								
STAR								
i-Ready®								
NWEA MAP®								
Others...								

Figure 4. Sample feature matrix

5. Collaboratively analyze the information collected through discussion of each assessment as it relates to the selected features:

- Is there unnecessary redundancy, i.e., same purpose and skills assessed through two different assessments? Are we over-testing the same skills?
- Are there specific types of assessments missing at elementary, middle, high school levels? (i.e., benchmark only at K-2 levels, but not at 3-12)
- Is there appropriate timing of the assessments, as per formal assessment requirements and/or for data team meeting discussions?
- Are there grade levels and/or content areas with limited assessments?
- Other needs?

6. Come to consensus on what will be included in the assessment map, the format of the map, communication, and availability of the map.

- Plan for communication and sharing of the assessment map
- Consider a range of stakeholders
 - Teachers – Veteran and New
 - Families
 - Community/Board

AUDITING YOUR ASSESSMENT MAP

Assessment maps are best analyzed on an annual basis to identify whether the map/plan is comprehensive and appropriate to the LEA/school’s context and needs. This can be done by a team of educators (administrators, school psychologists and teachers) who have an interest in and knowledge of student learning assessments. The process is best done with significant input from the school staff and transparency across the LEA to promote commitment and buy-in from all stakeholders.

The overarching question is:

Are we using the right assessments, for the right purposes, for the right students, at the right time?

To answer that overarching question, the team will need to determine the criteria they are using for “auditing” (see questions below for criteria development). Once the criteria have been decided, the team then creates a feature matrix (Fig. 5), which is then used to both guide the discussion and record the group responses.

Assessment	Purpose	Type	Skills Measured	Time to Administer	Time to Score	Cost	Group vs/ Individual	Technical Manual Access/ Review
Firefly								
CDT								
Acadience®								
STAR								
i-Ready®								
NWEA MAP®								
Others...								

Figure 5. Sample feature matrix

Specific questions are included below for the committee to explore and make decisions about the existing assessment map. Deep discussion of each question will help to avoid some of what might be typical responses (“we’ve tried this before and no one liked it” or “we’ve always used this, so it’s time to change it up”, etc.). The goal is to implement an annual process of reviewing the existing assessment map/plan to keep, discontinue and revise as appropriate.

- 1. Are the student learning assessments we are using providing us with the data needed to improve student outcomes?**
 - a. Do we have appropriate representation K-12 of summative, benchmark, diagnostic and formal progress monitoring (formative) assessments?
 - b. Is there a missing, yet important assessment type at any levels?
- 2. Are we clear on the purpose of each assessment?**
 - a. Do we know what the assessment will tell us?
 - b. Do the assessments answer our questions?
- 3. Do we know the validity and reliability of the assessment?**
 - a. Is there a technical manual available?
 - b. Has this been reviewed by educators with expertise in student assessment?
- 4. Is there redundancy across assessments?**
 - a. Are we “over-testing”?
 - b. Are the same skills unnecessarily assessed on more than one assessment?
- 5. Do we have planned repetition?**
 - a. Are assessments used aligned vertically so that student achievement and growth can be measured across grade levels?
 - b. Do assessments follow a student through his/her elementary years into middle school years? (longitudinal monitoring)
- 6. Are the reports/data available from each assessment user-friendly for teachers to act on the data?**
- 7. Is the time to administer and score the assessment reasonable and doable at the school level?**
 - a. Can we assess the same skills using a more efficient assessment?
 - b. Are data meetings scheduled to occur in a timely fashion after each administration window?
- 8. Are the chosen assessments cost effective?**
- 9. Is the training needed to effectively use the data appropriate for its’ use?**
- 10. Have we identified specific assessment tools for targeted student groups?**

More resources on this topic at education.pa.gov >